UNESCO
SOURCES
JULY-AUGUST 1995

IT'S A FIRST!

Peter Lomas
Training planner
Pacific Islands News Association Secretariat
Suva (Fiji)

Your excellent Focus section entitled, *"Tuning into the Global Village"* (*Sources*, No. 64) gave much deserved recognition to the good work of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC).

Your readers might be interested to know that Laisa Taga, who was featured in the article *"Rebel With A Cause"*, has now achieved a notable first. She has been appointed managing editor of Fiji's Daily Post, thus becoming the first woman editor of a daily newspaper in the independent nations of the Pacific Islands.

She is also continuing to teach good journalism to young reporters as one of the volunteer trainers at the IPDC-funded Fiji Journalism Training Institute.

IT'S JUST NOT LOGICAL

Yahya Diallo
Researcher
Institut fondamental d'Afrique Noire
(Core Institute of Black Africa)
Dakar (Senegal)

In reading your issue No. 65, my attention was drawn to the letter of another reader entitled, *"No other culture but that of peace"*. I totally agree with the arguments presented.

While there is a sort of "war logic", it is difficult to even conceptualize the notion of a war culture. To speak of such a culture inevitably harks back to a culture of peace - which brings us to believe in a simplified and reductive mental construction of the Manichean sort.

There is not a government in the world that would dare to claim the prerogative to deny its citizens' basic education - which has become a beacon and barometer of the time.

PRACTICAL AND STIMULATING

Bruno Granozio
General Delegate
French Federation of UNESCO Clubs
Paris (France)

For our Federation, your magazine is not only an excellent working tool but it also serves to stimulate debate and reflection on the themes presented through the abundance of practical information offered.

THE BEACON AND THE BAROMETER

M.S. Patel
Lecturer
Piparia, Hoshangabad (India)

I enjoyed your dossier on *"Education for All"* (*Sources*, No. 66). Education has come to be recognised as the hallmark of the time with UNESCO celebrating International Literacy Year in 1992. But the weed of illiteracy has not yet been rooted out and we must be careful not to confuse literacy with education. With mushrooming populations, we are faced with a Herculean task. When we turn to the grassroots structures, we see that the interational year has largely remained a myth and a mirage. In the eyes of the public, it was seen as full-fledged machinery on a crusade against the illiteracy giant but one which has not yet touched the core of developing countries.

It is a fact that UNESCO leaves no stone unturned to promote education methods in developing countries and has formulated basic education campaigns to increase cooperation and information. Through innovative schemes, practical problems are solved at the grassroots. We now need to see the results of the utopian dream come true. The seeds will sprout and the plants will give fruit to the grassroots.

All of this calls for a multi-pronged attack on various fronts. Today, basic education and literacy seem to be the very lifeblood of social and cultural transformation.

HOPE OR AT LEAST AN ILLUSION OF IT

Félicité Traoré
Teacher
Koulikoro (Mali)

A faithful reader of your magazine, I was so excited to learn in issue No. 66 that an independent television station has been set up in Sarajevo with UNESCO's help. The station directors are now ready to maintain their impartiality despite the pressure!

The city's viewers certainly need some semblance of hope and at least the illusion... of living like everybody else...

RULES OF THE ROAD

The "information highways" have, for the first time, officially made it onto UNESCO's agenda. The Executive Board, which has just finished meeting, has given them a prime position among the proposals for action over 1996-97. And next October/November's General Conference will more than likely give them the green light.

This should come as no surprise. On the the contrary, the advance, transfer and sharing of knowledge is UNESCO's "raison d'être". Neither should it be forgotten that the Organization is clearly mandated to "promote the free flow of ideas by word or image", and the information highways are emerging as a major vehicle for that purpose. UNESCO is also "keeper" of Universal Copyright Convention, adopted by the General Conference in 1952. Today copyright represents some six percent of the GDP of industrial countries. But to keep up with the times and protect authors on the new vast and nebulous communications networks, these rights need to evolve.

The information and communication revolution is as sweeping as the invention of the printing press in the 15th century. UNESCO, in its role as "lookout" over the great changes reshaping society, could not remain silent on an issue of such importance.

Nonetheless, the type of action that will be undertaken will be decided by the Member States, and they alone. All are gradually pulling out of the communications sector, leaving it largely in the hands of private enterprise, which is guided by the logic of the marketplace. But does this logic ensure access to the information highways for all? Is it sufficient to prevent new forms of discrimination between the haves and the have nots?

Road rules are obviously needed and public authorities - who serve to guarantee the interests of all - must be involved in drawing them up.

René LEFORT

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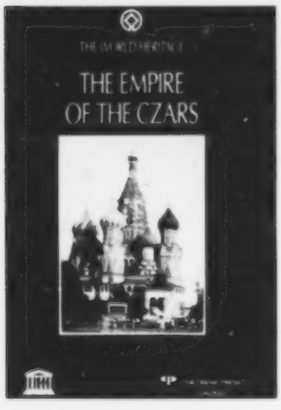
UNESCO SOURCES

BOOKS

THE EMPIRE OF THE CZARS

Discover a multitude of languages, religions and ways of life on a journey through Russia's past. Young readers travel along the path of expansion and conquest to learn how the lands of nomadic tribes later formed the empire of the Great Czars with such crown cities as Kiev, Moscow and St Petersburg. While marvelling at St Petersburg's neo-classical and baroque monuments, learn to appreciate that it was the forced labour of Russian soldiers and prisoners of war which transformed the swampy, inhospitable land into one of the epoch's most splendid cities. Then head



north to see the medieval religious architecture of Kizhi Pogost before going east to Itchan Kala - the last supply point for caravans travelling through the Kara Kum Desert.

● ***The Empire of the Czars,*** *Childrens Press/UNESCO 1994, 34 pp., 72 FF.*

UNESCO THESAURUS

A practical guide for navigating through the UNESCO Computerized Documentation System (CDS) containing the Organization's publications, periodicals, library acquisitions, as well as copies of notable speeches and field mission reports dealing with education, science, culture, social and human sciences, information and communication, politics, law and economics. With 6,600 terms, this revised version, originally published in 1977, includes French and Spanish translations of all the listed descriptors and indexes.

● ***UNESCO Thesaurus,*** *UNESCO Publishing 1995, 705 pp., 300 FF.*

A NEW PARTNERSHIP: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Steering clear of legal debates, this booklet sheds light on indigenous peoples themselves in broadly presenting their past and present suffering, their concern for natural resources and their aspirations for respect of their human rights. It also presents the contributions of NGOs and the role of the United Nations in accelerating negotiations to meet the pressing needs of the world's 'first peoples'. The booklet also serves as a teaching guide to these critical issues by presenting successful programmes offering a range of classroom techniques to get students to recognise and dispel stereotypes and reconsider historical and current events. It includes a list of related materials, surveys, publications, films and videos.

● ***A new partnership: indigenous peoples and the United Nations system,*** *by Judith P. Zinsser, Educational studies and documents, No. 62, UNESCO Publishing 1994, 120 pp., 60FF.*

REPRESENTATIVE WORKS

THE VORTEX FAMILY

In this poetic novel set in Haiti in 1949, Solon and his wife Olga gather their middle-class family together for Christmas, introducing us to the Vortex children who reflect the country's cultural richness through their cheerful, violent, cynical and impassioned characters. Edgard is the loyal assistant to Dumarsais Estimé, the reform-minded president who embodies the hope of

ordinary people. Joseph is a respected priest while Sylvain is a doctor and Louise a university lecturer whose wife Myriam is about to give birth. But the festivities are haunted by the absence of the mysterious Astrid, exiled for political reasons... The family's destiny becomes tied to that of the country as the siblings are drawninto the political drama leading to a *coup d'etat*. *The Vortex Family* affirms with sensual brilliance the life force of the Haitian people prevailing over political intrigue.

● ***The Vortex Family,*** *by Jean Metellus, translated and introduced by Michael Richardson, Peter Owen/ UNESCO Publishing 1995, 232 pp., 135 FF.*

PERIODICALS

THE UNESCO COURIER

"International fireworks" set off the July-August issue celebrating the centenary of cinema. This issue looks to the art of film, *"a unique, world-wide artistic adventure involving a vast number of personal aesthetic experiences"* capable of *"reaching popular audiences and of effortlessly crossing geographical and cultural borders,"* as described by the editorialists. Directors, scriptwriters, producers and actors - including American Milos Forman, Germany's Volker Schlöndorff, French Jean-Claude Carrière, Mani Kaul of India, Iran's Abbas Kiarostami, Nagisa Oshima of Japan and Italian Marcello Mastroianni - describe the relations between cinema, their own lives and the world. This issue also explores broader questions: is the cinema an art or an industry? Can it be both at once? What are its chances against today's television and tomorrow's multimedia?
The issue also presents *"A Silver-Screen Symphony"* - a text written by the great French art historian Elie Faure which has remained unedited since his death in 1937 - as a final testimony to the multiplicity of talents forming the art of cinema.

CD-ROM

BIRDS OF EUROPE

Part of a series of biological multimedia CDs prepared by the Expert-center for Taxonomic Identification with UNESCO's support, the disc offers a complete guide to the 419 most important birds in Europe, with colour pictures, distribution maps, songs and sonograms. The perfect tool for the experienced or newly initiated bird-watcher with a glossary of terms, historical information, a species list and even a *"bird quiz"*.

● ***Birds of Europe,*** *ETI 1993, 520 FF.*

Publications and periodicals are on sale at the UNESCO Bookshop, or by order from UNESCO Publishing, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, and in Member States through national distributors. Catalogue available on request.

PETER BRIDGEWATER: GETTING THINGS DONE

It was Peter Bridgewater's boyhood passion for train spotting that launched him into his career as a botanist.

"There was nothing to do between trains except study the plants on the railway banks... one thing led to another and here I am!" explains the new Chairman of the Man and Biosphere Programme's International Coordinating Council, which met at UNESCO's Paris Headquarters from June 12 to 16.

These days though, at 49 *"and still holding"*, the British-born Australian rarely gets to collect plants except from his own garden. His new MAB *"hat"* is but the latest in an impressive collection that includes - among others - chairmanship of the International Whaling Commission, chairmanship of the Standing Committee for the Convention in Migratory Species, and the post of Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Nature Conservation Agency.

"I can't really claim to be pure scientist any more," he says without regret, and admitting that *"in any case I am not patient enough and don't like detail"*. Nonetheless he maintains a professional interest in *"landscape ecology"*, looking *"at the whole picture, rather than just one aspect"*.

He is pragmatic, to the point and, despite an unassuming countenance, a man who wants to make an impact. *"At the end of the day, as an academic, you can only achieve things within a limited framework. I feel that I have a much greater ability to get things done on a larger scale."*

Consequently Bridgewater has high ambitions for the MAB Programme, even with *"the gap between the enthusiasm the programme musters and its resources"*.

"MAB can put principles into action. Its biosphere reserves for example, now spread throughout 82 countries, provide the world's leading models on achieving biodiversity protection and sustainable development. They need to be put up in lights."

Despite an unrelenting workload and a travel schedule that allows him to see his wife and daughter only occasionally (*"thank God for E-Mail!"*), he is obviously delighted with his election to the Council's top job. *"It's a good time to be chairman of MAB. Our recent conference in Seville* (see Sources No. 69) *provided us with an eminently sensible and truly global strategy that we can put to work in many countries."* Is he being overly optimistic? *"No! You've got to be positive. We all know that the world is groaning under the weight of too many people, but we've now reached the critical mass of common sense that's needed to get things done."*

Sue WILLIAMS

BOULAT OKOUDJAVA: "A DEPRESSED OPTIMIST"

No matter where he goes - Moscow, New York or Paris - Boulat Okoudjava packs the house. So it came as no surprise when, on 23 June, his fans filled UNESCO's auditorium for a concert upon the invitation of the Permanent Delegation of Russia.

For those familiar with Russian culture, there's no need to introduce this writer, composer, singer and poet. At 71, Okoudjava is a living legend, representing several generations. For Russian poets do more than write. Whether they like it or not, society looks to them as orators and prophets.

A veteran opposed to war and a humanist, Okoudjava continues the poetic tradition of the Russian symbolists from the start of the century. But how can someone so attached to the world-weary Feodor Sologoub, a writer famous for his extreme subjectivism, remain an optimist? How can he keep his faith in humanity after all of the lost hopes of Russia's recent and distant past? *"I'm a depressed optimist,"* answers Okoudjava. *"I don't believe in the existence of a criminal - although some pretend to know his name - who was solely responsible for corrupting the Russians. It's a longer story than that and there's no choice but to change. But it isn't easy."*

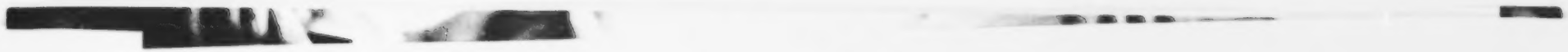
After fighting in the Second World War, Okoudjava studied literature, returning to Moscow in 1956 after Stalin's death. With friends distributing recordings of his poems and songs, Okoudjava emerged as a cult figure among the intelligentsia, eventually drawing international attention. But with fame came the suspicions of the Soviet government in the 1970s, forcing Okoudjava to curtail his concerts and *"negotiate"* with censors.

Today, Okoudjava is still 'idolised'. But with his family roots in the Caucasus, some still have trouble seeing him as a full-bred Russian. *"I care very little about the blood running in my veins. I was born in Moscow. I have been brought up with the great Russian culture and I consider myself more Russian than a lot of the Petrovs and Ivanovs, even if I don't scream it from the roof,"* he says. *"My only regret is not being able to speak in Georgian because all languages have a certain richness."*

And why did the man who disdains politics recently publish a series of articles denouncing the war in Chechnya? *"Because war is always horrible,"* he explains. *"Good excuses for going to war are extremely rare. In any case, there are never any excuses when it comes to waging war against your own people. The problem is basically the same as that of a century ago: we just don't want to understand that others can see the world differently than we do. This has always been the root of intolerance and hate..."*

Andrei JVIRBLIS

• We *"will profit greatly"* by looking to the thoughts and actions of **MAHATMA GANDHI** for *"the fundamental issues of our time: the questions of war and peace in the nuclear age; the problems of production and distribution in a post-modern era; and the globalization of economic and information systems,"* said India's Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao at UNESCO's Headquarters on 12 June. Mr Rao gave the first of a series of lectures planned at the Organization to commemorate the 125th anniversary of Gandhi's birth and the UN Year for Tolerance in 1995.
A concert was then given with Amjad Ali Khan playing the sarod (a string instrument) accompanied by the vocalist Balamurali Krishna. Both were presented with UNESCO's Gandhi commemorative medals in bronze, designed by the French artist Yves Trémois.



WOMEN: BETWEEN YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

Women's lives are changing. They are marrying later, having fewer children and living much longer, albeit at different rates in different regions (see below).
Focus this month presents seven women from different regions and cultures, where these changes are having a real impact or where they are only just beginning to be felt. These women do not necessarily represent the "norm" in their country. Rather they illustrate the groundswell of change that is radically altering social structures and the lifestyles of girls and women everywhere. They also highlight the inevitable contradictions of this process: the desire for change and the fear of it; the courage to challenge tradition and the need to take refuge in it; the energy and freedom that can come with economic and social development and the poverty reserved for those left behind.

Two thirds of the more than 800 million illiterates around the world are women. Almost half a million women die every year from pregnancy related causes. Eighty percent of the refugees or persons displaced because of conflict are women and children. Religious fundamentalism and conservatism in several parts of the world are moving to deprive women of basic, often hard-won rights -such as the right to employment, freedom of expression or control of fertility. The big picture for women, put in this way with but a few examples, looks bleak.

And yet there is also a groundswell of change being felt almost everywhere, that is profoundly altering women's lives and the way in which their societies function.

These essentially cultural changes are the subject of a research project undertaken by UNESCO and the non governmental Society for International Development (SID), the results of which will undoubtedly enliven the debates at the Fourth UN Conference on Women in Beijing (China) in September.

A workshop held under this project at UNESCO headquarters in April this year, and attended by a number of specialists from all of the world's regions, was able to broadly delineate several emerging patterns.

Three of these stand out as being especially important.

Firstly, the participants found that in many societies, development has expanded the period of childhood and adolescence for young women and created new cultural expectations and practices. In other words, child brides are on the way out,and young women in many countries are experiencing adolescence for the first time.

Then,perceptions of maternity are changing.Women are decreasing the number of children they are having and are spacing their births. Motherhood, while remaining one of society's most cherished roles, is no longer the be all and end all of a woman's existence. The drop in birth rates has been particularly sharp in Latin America and Asia, falling in many countries there by more than half in only 20 years.

Thirdly, women are living much longer, healthier lives, giving rise to a new life stage that has been dubbed "the third age". This is particularly marked in the West. Betty Friedan, author of "The Feminine Mystique" and "The Fountain of Age", pointed out at the workshop that people of the third age are fast becoming the majority of the U.S population. Only five percent of Americans over 65 suffer symptoms of senility, she said, and many remain healthy and active until well into their 80s It should be stressed however, that the same quality of life is not available to millions of older women in the developing world, who're often left behind in periods of social change.

The implications of these changes are enormous. To start with, the decreasing numbers of children and the increase in life expectancy, globally speaking, mean that women now have between 10 and 40 years of their lives for activities other than family duties! Statistics show that more women than ever before are taking paid jobs outside the home. One third of all households are now headed by women.

This is but the tip of the iceberg. Clearly societies everywhere are undergoing a transition in which women are key actors - in all domains, from population dynamics and family structures to economic development.

It would, therefore, seem not only logical, but essential that their contribution, their ideas and perceptions be taken into account. And that the good intentions, regularly announced by those that govern us concerning the status and empowerment of women, move from being words on an agenda to policy that is put into practice.

Sue WILLIAMS

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THE WORLD MOVES ON, DOESN'T IT?

At 21, Rachna Sharma's mother had already been married for seven years. Not so her thoroughly modern, yet thoroughly Indian daughter.

There are sections of Indian society today that have been completely transformed by global culture; and there are the *"weaker"* sections - as we call them - languishing in the backwaters of survival. Between these two extremes flows a steady, less visible stream that is modernizing, yet moored sturdily in what most Indians proudly call their *"cultural heritage"*.

This stream belongs largely to urban India, to an educated middle class alert as much to the easy traps laid by the consumer culture as to the bigotry that often passes muster as our *"age-old traditions"*. Twenty-one year-old Rachna Sharma belongs to this class. She comes from a Rajasthani Brahmin family that migrated to Delhi more than 20 years ago. Self-confident and articulate, Rachna retains her mother Gita's coyness and simplicity but in all other ways she is a fully urban product and proud to be so.

Gita married at 14, as was customary in her community. Neither she nor her seven brothers and sisters was educated. Her 18 year-old husband, K. L. Sharma - presently the Head of the Centre for the Study of Social Systems in the Jawaharlal Nehru University - was just out of high school. Both came from large families whose female members were either barely literate or not all.

NO REGRETS

After marriage, Prof. Sharma continued his studies in the city and the couple did not live together for 10 years till his Ph. D. was done. When Gita joined him in Delhi she was instantly drawn into the academic world. Her illiteracy was *"sometimes a handicap,"* admits Rachna, *"but my mother has no major regrets"*. That her husband from a rural background had achieved so much was for her both surprising and unexpected. His family was good, their marriage was satisfactory, she played her role of nurturing and upholding family values, she had no further aspirations.

And so Rachna grew up in a tension-free home. Her family has been a source of strength and, till now, the focus of her existence. Yes, cultural norms in India are repressive for girls, she admits, but this can be countered by family support. *"I have imbibed values from my family. I will never break away from."* Mode of dress, speech and behaviour are manifestations of this. *"My parents would not, for instance, like to see me in pants or shorts or a skirt"* (Rachna sports the normal demure salwar-kameez).

Living with a man, *"is out of question. It would spell disaster for my parents."* Nonetheless, this young adult is no copy of her mother. She neither prays regularly nor fasts, nor is the quiet, self-effacing wholly tolerant person her mother is. And silence is not her refuge.

RACHNA SHARMA
(Photo L. Padgaonkar).

Unconsciously, Rachna is stretching the social fabric she sprang from, gently bending it within the limits of the permissible. For her, both father and mother are role models, explains sociologist Dr. Renuka Singh - the mother on the psychological level, via her far-flung family ties and the virtues of sacrifice and composure, the father by his enlightened attitude and encouragement. Her situation demonstrates *"the role the family can and is playing in society, making people feel rooted. In the post-modernist context, such tensions as exist are resolved by sticking to traditional values. And there is a lot of denial here."*

The break-up of the family - even of the nuclear family - the rift between generations, is an area of serious concern for Rachna (*"I do not believe my two brothers will do as much for their father as my father does for his relations."*) who, after her Master's in Zoology, is ready for a job as an assistant producer with a TV company. She fears the splintering and loneliness the times engender. *"There is no one then to call your own."*

In the years ahead, Rachna sees herself as married, having children, pursuing a career and living in India. Will she settle for an arranged marriage? Yes, *"if I don't fall in love before that."* But she will not marry - as far as possible - outside her community for *"her relatives might not like it"*. Her father confesses that a boy from the same caste would be preferable.

NO ROMANTIC ILLUSIONS

The question of dowry is yet to be settled. For the first and only time Rachna uses the word *"conflict"*. *"I want to marry someone who can say he wants nothing from us. But my parents want to give me gifts and feel I shouldn't refuse."*

Rachna returns regularly to her family's village to spend time with her relations. Her views of rural India admit no romance. Admiration for the feeling of oneness among kinfolk is sobered by an uneasiness at what she sees. *"There is no substance in a person's life, it is mundane, bound by routine. And then, they are extremely conscious of caste and religion. They will not eat in a Muslim home, the sweeper will not enter certain parts of the house. Besides, lack of regular water, medical facilities and education and early marriage... no, I cannot romanticize village life. The world moves on, doesn't it?"*

As Rachna steps out of the protected shell of home and classroom into the world of work *"to earn a name, not just have a job or money"*, she is probably in for some rude surprises. Already, her first visit to the television studios was, she confesses, a *"culture shock"*. But she goes out armed with an inquisitive mind and well-defined, unwavering beliefs. This is surely a huge assert. It helps to restore one's faith in the future of India.

Latika PADGAONKAR
New Delhi

CHILD-MOTHER

15 year old Melissa joins the swelling ranks of teen-age mothers in the US - one of the world's wealthiest nations, where sex education and contraception are theoretically freely available.

In the subway going from Flushing, Queens, to Manhattan, the passengers smile at the young girl kissing her little brother. But, tune into the conversation and it becomes quickly apparent that the girl is not a big sister. She is the child's mother.

When at the age of 14, Melissa caught the attention of a 20 year old boy, she was overjoyed. Her status as the girlfriend of someone that much older than herself gave her enormous prestige at school. Five months later, she discovered that she was pregnant.

Melissa is luckier than most. Despite the fact that her divorced mother was struggling to support four children, working as a nurse in a local hospital, Melissa was able to count on her support. The whole family, including her grandmother from Houston, Texas, rallied around and helped with money and clothes once little Rudy (now 18 months old) was born, so that Melissa could go back to school.

"I'm so happy to be back in school after having had this baby and to see my friends again - even though I can't go out and have fun with them like before," Melissa said, noting that as soon as her pregnancy was confirmed, her boyfriend, Tony, *"angrily left the scene"*.

NOTHING NEW

Tony had suggested an abortion, but Melissa was always against the idea. *"I once watched a video that showed how it tears a baby apart."* The young mother is now attending a neighbourhood parental education programme where she learns how to take care of Rudy as well as hygiene and family planning.

Such programmes exist because teenage mothers are increasingly common in the United States. The problem is particularly acute in New York, where in 1991 almost 29,000 babies were born to girls aged 19 and under - 600 of them being under 15. Across the country, the figure is some 500,000 annually, and increasing. Why is it happening in this most powerful and richest of nations?

"It's not a new problem" argues school psychologist Ruth Ess. *"Perhaps what is new is the way society is considering it."*

Paul Jackson, a newspaper reporter in the New York borough of Queens has another view. *"In a rich society like the US, where you also have disparities, kids are getting everything too fast,"* he says. *"They don't have time to assimilate it and it's true when it comes to sex. Information is made available. But can we be sure that it reaches every kid in New York?"*

Rudy's mother is a case in point. Melissa recognizes that she did not want to have children so early, but she did not use birth control either. *"I didn't know about contraception,"* admits Melissa. *"At the school I attended, they didn't provide sex education. It had been proposed but some parents complained, saying it would encourage kids to have sex. Well, excuse me but 11 and 12 year old girls are getting pregnant. I think they are entitled to all the education they need. Boys should also have access to it."*

The growing numbers of teenage mothers has provoked a heated debate among politicians, women's groups, educators and health care providers as they try to work out what to do about it, and how to help these young mothers while breaking down the discrimination often facing them.

Studies carried out by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) show that more than half of these young women drop out before graduation and three out of four end up living in poverty, sometimes in such extreme poverty that they are pushed to abandon their babies or give them up for adoption.

Many teenagers who have had children are unable to continue their education because of financial problems. Others cannot deal with the stigma attached to having had a child while so young. Some schools refuse to take these students, and a few, like Melissa, opt for a new school.

Melissa copes financially with $196 in food stamps and a $163 state welfare check every month. Her father, who still lives in Houston also sends her $50 a month. She contributes $60 a month to the household expenses. Given the circumstances, she knows she is in a privileged position. *"Without the food stamps and the help I get from the family, I would be obliged to get a job, any job,"* says Melissa. What of the future? Despite the obvious difficulties, she remains optimistic. She wants to graduate from high school and study computer systems, and, once she has her diploma in hand, she may marry Rudy's father. Tony began seeing Melissa again when she was six months pregant. Despite his father's disapproval, they attend the parental guidance programme together.

Melissa sees changes in herself, recognizing that she has been pushed into adulthood several years before her time. *"Before, I was carefree, with no responsibilities. All I thought about was having fun with my friends and dressing up in cute clothes. Now that I have Rudy, I love him so much, and I want to be the best mother ever."*

Ihsan BOUABID JACOBSOHN
New York

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"ON MY OWN!"

Graciela is doing things her way - deliberately foregoing marriage and limiting the number of children she has in an effort to give them the best chance possible in an uncertain world.

Graciela García Hernández has two children, her daughter Guadalupe, 15, and her son Martín, born in 1990. She's a single, god-fearing Catholic with a steady job in Mexico City, the world's largest city. But at 36, Graciela fears for the future, *"not for myself, because I have already lived, but for them and for the country they will have to face".*

"We put our trust in one president and he led us on. Then we pinned our hopes on the new one to improve things and nothing happened. But things are worse under this one, although we trust him more, because," argues Graciela, *"the more you earn, the less it's worth."*

THE PLUMMETING PESO

Her complaint echoes that of millions of Mexicans who, in a few hours last December, saw the dream of *"First World"* membership vanish as the peso plummeted.

Graciela and her seven brothers and sisters come from Celaya in the state of Guanajuato. In 1959 her mother Remedios, a peasant from San Miguel Allende, sought refuge with her children in Mexico City, fleeing from her husband, who had beaten her.

That is why Graciela, although baptised and confirmed as a Catholic, like her children, decided not to get married, turning down the proposal made by her childrens' father. *"I felt that if the same thing happens to me as happened to my mother, I'd be better off single. And if my children don't get married, that's just too bad, because, the truth is, nobody wants to get married any more,"* says Graciela. *"It's better to live together, with respect and understanding for your partner. And when you no longer love each other, you go your own way.*

"I only had a couple of children after seeing how hard my mother worked to keep us. She had to pay for electricity, rent, shoes and school... So I thought, 'just two or three children - but on my own'. I never wanted to get married," she says, while hanging her wash on the rooftop in Colonia del Valle, in Mexcio City's more prosperous southern area. It's the same building where, 26 years ago, Remedios found a job as a caretaker.

Considering herself a good Catholic, Graciela has never used contraception and wouldn't think of having an abortion *"because that would be a sin"*. But she decided to have a tubal ligation after the birth of Martín. She goes to church only when the spirit moves her and tells her kids *"that if they decide to go, they should go with faith and listen to what the priest has to say. If they just go to see how the girl from next door is dressed, it'll be hard to find God."*

But when it comes to her kids' education, Graciela stands firm. *"Let them study and make the most of the opportunities I never had. I only went to primary school but Guadelupe is already starting secondary and Martín goes to a State nursery,"* says the proud mother.

Aside from her decisions concerning marriage, it is in her relationship with her kids that Graciela sees the biggest differences between her life and her mother's. *"My mother would never have gone to a psychologist to learn to deal with us as kids. I would. My mother never told me anything about sex or about what would happen to us at the age of 13 or 14. I found out everything for myself."*

Guadalupe, on the other hand, asks her mother more questions than Graciela can answer. So she turns to her brother Carmelo. *"He has an encyclopaedia on sex. But he tells me that it's not enough to read about it, I must talk with her and explain everything just as it is and not resort to silence. I am afraid to speak, maybe because I don't know how to answer."*

Graciela works in a private home, earning the equivalent of $200 a month for eight hours work a day (more than the minimum wage and a little less than what a school teacher earns) - just enough to cover essentials.

She works hard to scrape a living, like thousands of other people barely getting by in the city - all of them determined never to return to the fields. For in Mexico, arable land has been abandoned by peasants unable to get loans. Banks consider it less risky to invest in stocks than lend to farmers.

Graciela is disturbed by her country's socio-political situation and particularly the plight of her people - the Indians and peasants of Chiapas. She can barely conceal her anger with the way in which authorities have dealt with the revolt that erupted a year and a half ago in the southern state. *"The truth is that I don't know much about it. The conflict seems so far away. I don't like thinking of these kinds of problems, because they upset me. But I know that I should. So many of our people are having such a hard time..."*

Graciela is frustrated to the point of tears. She wants to help, but doesn't know how. She deplores the way the government has responded, with *"the governor just talking and talking, but doing nothing"*. But here again, she vacilates. For when it comes time to vote, Graciela tows the line, explaining *"better the devil you know than the one you don't"*.

Irene SELSER
Mexico City

THE QUEST FOR A BOY CHILD

Aku Wemegah regrets having so many children, but unbending tradition means that her child bearing days are perhaps not yet over.

Ashiaman in Ghana is a vivid example of an urban slum in Africa. It sprung up as a satellite settlement to the harbour and industrial city of Tema, about 22 km from the capital of Accra. It is over-populated, with all the attendant social problems of crime, prostitution, filth and lack of basic amenities. Ashiaman is the home of Aku Wemegah and her family.

At 38, Aku has seven children: five girls and two boys. The eldest, "Dede", is 18 years old while the youngest is three years old. Aku attributes her large family size to the strongly held Ghanaian preference for boys to ensure the continuation of the family name. Despite an active family planning programme, this tradition has meant that Ghana's women still have an average 5-6 children each.

"I didn't have male children early. It is the quest to have sons that has resulted in my having so many children", Aku said, while fanning the fire under the ground cassava meal she is frying to sell. *"I regret having many children. There are too many problems involved. I wish I had four or five"*.

MORE ?

Asked if she will have additional children, she quickly answered in the negative. *"It is enough. I won't have more. I would rather go to the hospital and have my womb turned"*. (She is referring to tubal ligation which to the local people implies turning of the womb to avoid pregnancy).

But Aku does not have too much say on the question. In Ghana as in other African countries, a wife who practises any family planning method (especially the invisible methods like the loop or injection) without the consent of the husband will incur her husband's displeasure. In some cases this will even lead to a divorce because the women's action will be interpreted to mean an attempt to indulge in extra-marital affairs, without getting pregnant.

Early this year, Aku told her husband Godwin Ahiable of her desire to have a tubal ligation. Her husband has not given a favourable response.

"He says I should seek permission from my family because I am their daughter."

By this response, the man is implying that he would not take responsibility for any complications arising out of the surgery. This response also implies his non-endorsement of Aku's proposal. In other words he wants as many children as Aku can have.

Godwin knows it would be absurd for his wife to go before her family to discuss an issue like that bordering on intimacy. In Africa, issues related to sex are hardly discussed in the open. A wife does not have the right to challenge her husband's position relating to sex. She must always be responsive to his requests.

This is why Aku is confused as to how to prevent additional pregnancies. She has already been advised at a family planning clinic against having the depo provera injection because she has a problem of varicose veins.

Ironically, her husband is a health worker. He retired from the Services of Valco, Ghana's premier alimunium manufacturing industry, and now works in a clinic in Tema.

Aku says she has asked her husband several times to use condoms but *"Efo* (the appellation used by the Ewe-speaking people to address their husbands and elder brothers) *does not use anything and he doesn't respond when I ask"*.

She obviously does not want to have 10 kids like her late mother (of whom only five are still living). In some cultures, including Aku's, a woman who bears 10 children is held in high esteem and special rites are performed for her. But for Aku, *"there are too many problems involved. Even caring for them is a problem"*.

A ROOF, FOOD AND EDUCATION

This then brought us to the very important issue of maintaining the children. *"My husband gives me a monthly allowance of about $40 to feed the family. I supplement this with my earnings from the sale of cassava meal and cassava dough."* Fortunately for Aku Efo pays school fees, buy books and bears all other responsibilities. He has also put up a small brick house where the family lives so they don't have to pay rent to anybody. When Aku travels, her husband looks after the children.

It is clear that Aku and her husband place a high premium on the children's education. The eldest, who is in her second year of Junior High School was doing her homework when I asked her to join her siblings for a picture. She quickly responded and gathered them all around. Seniority is much respected and so being the eldest, she has control over her other siblings who will ordinarily respond to her orders and requests.

All the children, except for the youngest, are in school. *"I will toil to get them all in school so that in future they can also look after me. Education is good"*.

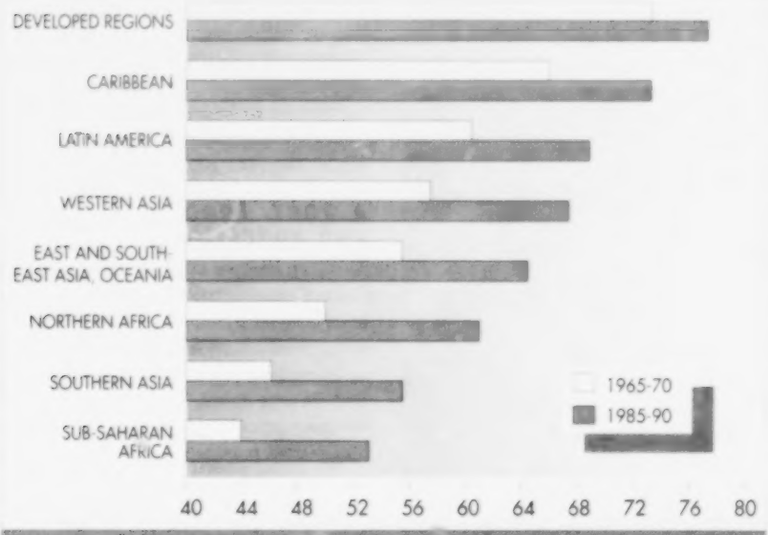
Asked to comment on her marital life, she says plainly *"We are fine. To be successful in marriage, one has to have a very big heart to accommodate the many problems associated with marriage. How can you live with a man for upwards of 20-30 years if you don't have a big heart? It is the women who should have this big heart. Change is coming for us, but very slowly. I keep telling my sisters to persevere"*.

Akua DANSUA,
Accra

WOMEN: SOME VITAL STATISTICS

Around the world women are living longer, having their children later and having fewer of them. This is happening much faster in some regions than in others, and is clearly linked to the access that girls

LONGER LIVES

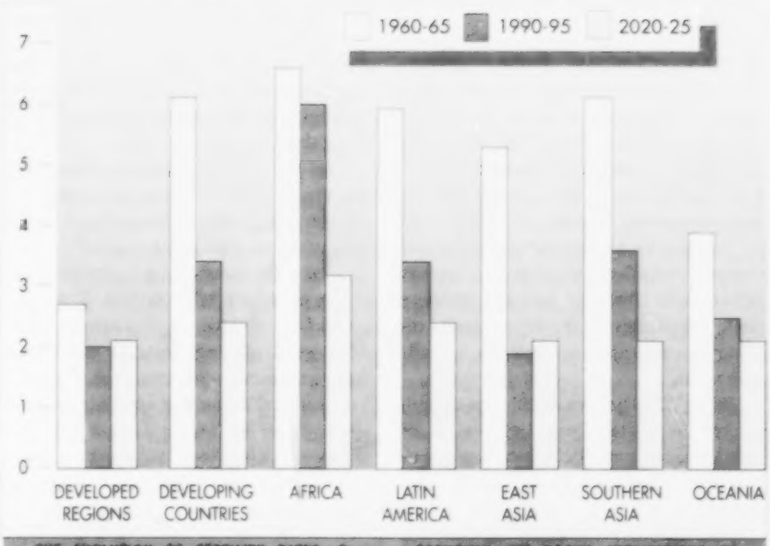


THE EVOLUTION OF WOMEN'S LIFE EXPECTANCY. Source: THE WORLD'S WOMEN, TRENDS AND STATISTICS 1970-1990 UNITED NATIONS.

Between 1970 and 1990, women's life expectancy at birth increased substantially in all regions of the world. This increase was between eight and nine years in the developing countries and four years in the developed nations.

This means that in the developed regions today, women live an average 6.5 years longer than men. In the developing regions the difference is five years in Latin America and the Caribbean, 3.5 years in Africa and three years in Asia and the Pacific. It also means that women are more likely to be widowed on their later years and become dependent in the state, their children or savings.

FEWER CHILDREN



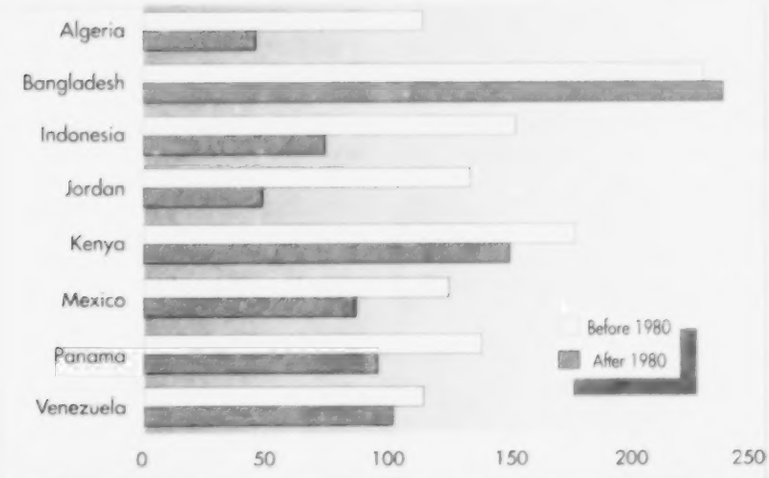
THE EVOLUTION OF FERTILITY RATES. Source : ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION AGING, UN, 1988.

Women everywhere are having fewer children. Child-bearing rates in developed regions, already low in the late 50s, have, in the 90s, fallen to a level slightly below what it takes for a population to maintain itself. The drop has been even more pronounced in the developing regions and will continue falling. It should be noted though that these averages hide marked differences among countries.

In many of the least developed countries, the decline in fertility is recent. Sub-Saharan Africa shows only a small drop over the past 20 years and with 6.0 births per women has a higher fertility rate than any other region. According to UNESCO's 1994 edition of Education for All: Status and Trends, based on figures gathered in the early 90s, Rwanda had the world's highest fertility rate with 8.5 births per woman.

have to education - the key not only to economic and social development, but also to equality of opportunity between the sexes.

TEENAGE MOTHERS ON THE DECLINE, BUT...



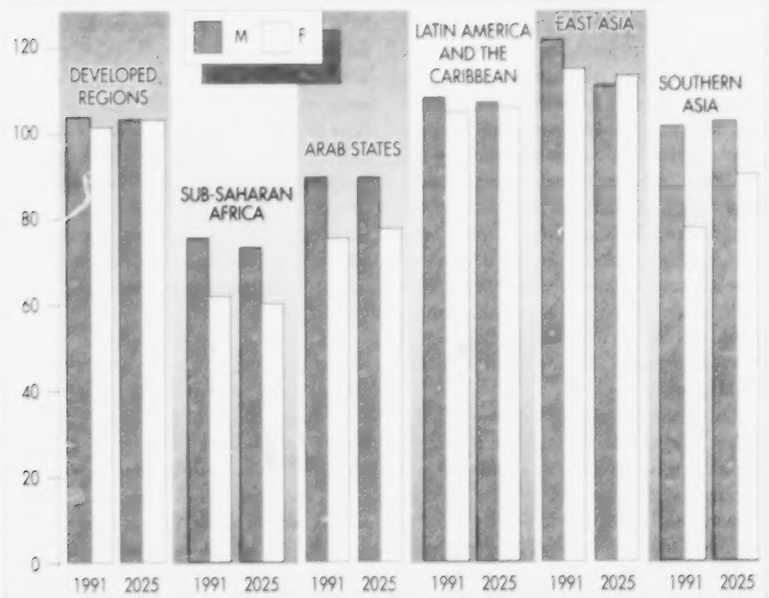
BIRTHS per 1,000 TEENAGE GIRLS IN A SELECTION OF COUNTRIES - ADOLESCENT PREGNANCY IS ESPECIALLY COMMON. Source: The World's Women, Trends and Statistics, 1970-1990, UN.

Birth rates for young women are also on the decline in many parts of the developing world. This drop corresponds to a rise in the age of women at their first marriage in these countries, which can be directly attributed to greater access to education for girls.

Nonetheless, adolescent marriage and pregnancy remains very common in many countries, as the graph opposite shows. In Bangladesh, for example, 73 percent of girls are married by age 15 and 21 percent have had at least one child.

Adolescent child bearing rates are much lower in the developed regions, except in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania and the United States, where they were 50 per 1000 in the late 1980s.

EDUCATION: THE KEY TO CHANGE



PROJECTED EVOLUTION OF GIRLS' AND BOYS' PRIMARY SCHOOL ENROLMENT. Source: UNESCO's Office of Statistics.

Despite an overall increase in the numbers of girls attending primary school between 1980 and 1990, important disparities still exist. This is particularly noticeable in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and Southern Asia, where, as the graph opposite reveals, little improvement is expected before well into the next century.

And yet an educated female population benefits everyone. Birth rates drop and child survival rates increase, as does the general health and well-being of families. Also, an increasing proportion of educated girls and women have jobs and play a significant role in their country's socio-economic development.

At the 3rd UN Conference on Women in Nairobi, 1985, equal access to education and training was listed as a priority for the advancement of women. The world is still a long way from achieving this goal.

Infography: A. Darmon

VEILING THE FACE, NOT THE SPIRIT

It is within Islam that Nahed Saleh, a middle class woman working in Cairo, is trying to defend her "freedom of choice" against the threat posed by religious extremists.

Nahed Saleh is not a revolutionary. She is just one of the millions of Egyptian women torn between a powerful desire for emancipation and the fear of cutting themselves off from society. *"We are on the eve of the 21st century with profound changes taking place in society,"* she says. *"There can be no development or progress if we ignore half the population. We women were not born just to produce and breast feed children. We are an integral part of society with a contribution to make towards building our country."* In fact, she adds, *"there are examples in our history of women who have worked and even gone to war."*

During these difficult times, the main thing, in her opinion, is to stand firm on the essentials, the right to education and employment. *"Religion encouraged women's work,"* she insists. *"Khadeja, the wife of the Prophet Mohammed, ran a business and worked with her husband."* To maintain this achievement, Nahed has made *"a minor concession"* by wearing the *hijab* (Islamic head scarf). *"At the beginning of the 19th century,"* she says, *"women protested against the veil and up until the 1970s, wearing or not wearing, it didn't make much of a difference to me. The question only became important under the influence of certain elements. It is an obligation prescribed by our religion which, however, neither restrains freedom nor degrades the appearance of women. It's not because they wear the hijab or the chador that women have abandoned school or work. In my opinion, veiling the spirit is far more dangerous than veiling the face."*

IN THE SHADOW OF A MAN

Having earned a diploma as a secretary, Nahed lives in Cairo where she works for a big insurance company. Although she doesn't find selling insurance policies particularly exciting, the work ensures her financial independence and safeguards her dignity. This is why she is so concerned about appeals inciting women to return to their homes. In her country women are victims of unemployment, she says. They are encouraged to leave their jobs to young males. But no one says anything about the million and a half child labourers, despite laws prohibiting it.

Nahed went against tradition, refusing to marry the first man who came along simply, to follow the proverb *"it's better to be in the shadow of a man than that of the walls."* In spite of family pressures, she waited until she was 30 and had a job to marry (the average marrying age for Egyptian women is 22) a man of her choice. Life, however, is not a bed of roses. *"My husband is forced to work overtime,"* she explains. *"When he comes home, he's so tired he doesn't even want to have dinner with us."* Nahed's days are long. *"I wake up in the morning, get my two sons ready, take them to school before going to work. On the way home, I shop and pick up the kids. Then I prepare dinner, supervise their homework and clean up the house. If we were better off financially, I would take some time off to devote myself a bit more to myself and my family"*. For Nahed, this *"social role"* of taking care of the family should rightly fall to women but not serve as an argument to exclude them from the world of work.

Our real problem is demographic growth, she says while insisting that family planning be accepted as a means to improving living standards. Here, Nahed is uncompromising, ready to stand up to the *"religious leaders"* who pull the ball back into their own field by labeling some methods *"halal"* (licit), and others *"haram"* (illicit). Born into a family of eight children of which three died in infancy, Nahed knows what she's talking about. *"My parents' only earned enough to send two of us to university,"* she explains. *"Two others dropped out earlier on and the youngest was sick. When I look at my mother, married at 20, I see the ravages of time. At 50, she has already lost her freshness. This is why I don't want any more children. 'El hamdu lillah' (thank God), contraceptives now make birth control possible."*

And what about the bitterly controversial subject of excision? For Nahed, those who defend this sexual mutilation *"are the same as those who would like harems to be restored"*. To fight the practice, the social system established over thousands of years must be transformed by changing the image of women. She however, considers it useless to impose sanctions. Instead, people must be convinced of the pernicious nature of excision and its *"harmful psychological, physiological and social effects."*

In the final analysis, Nahed is *"proud"* of her generation which, she feels, has proved itself worthy of the pioneers who fought for equality of the sexes in the 19th century. *"Despite problems with the economy, development and the population crisis, the Egyptian woman has become a unique human being. This is what encourages me to defend our rights with every means authorised by Islam and society."*

Samia ABBAS
Cairo

LIVING LIFE TO THE FULL

The dilemma of the modern grandmother, says Swedish journalist and social activitst Karin Coyet, is that we don't have enough time to spend with our grandchildren!

Few Swedish grandmothers know how to discuss the technical subtleties in computers with their grandchildren. But magazine woman Karin Coyet, 73, and grandmother of 13 year-old Alexandra does. *"Look, Sandra,"* she says proudly at the screen, *"this is how my latest programme works"*.

Karin Coyet lives in a cozy three room apartment in Gamla Stan, the old part of Stockholm in Sweden. The building, 300 years old, is located only a few blocks away from the Stockholm Palace. *"I belong to a very fortunate generation of Swedes"*, Karin says humbly. *"Even if many suffered from hard times with high unemployment rates and poverty during the 30s, most of us have had a really good life since."*

She was born in Stockholm in 1922, daughter of a pediatrician and his wife. *"My mother had studied at the university. But she never got the opportunity for a professional life. In her times any woman who was not forced to work for economic reasons had to stay home as a housewife. I think my mother missed that opportunity her whole life. And it was thanks to her that I got into journalism. My father had no other expectations of me than that I would get married and have kids."*

SEIZING OPPORTUNTIES

Karin spent all her active years at the Bonnier Magazine Group, the dominating magazine company of Sweden, working as managing editor or editor-in-chief. *"The company had a tradition of hiring female journalists which gave me a good chance to advance."*

In 1946 Karin married. *"Six months after my son was born I was offered the possibility of furthering my journalistic training on different magazines abroad. This educational programme was a big chance to improve professionally, and I felt that I couldn't pass it up. But it meant that I had to leave my son with my husband and a maid for almost a year, which is something I regret very much. That is a thing my daughter, Hermine, who is also a journalist, would never do. Today there is an established knowledge of small children's needs of their mothers, which Swedish mothers are very aware of."*

At 62, Karin retired. But instead of taking to her rocking chair, and becoming a full time grandmother to her three grandchildren, she joined a group of young freelance journalists and continued working. Ten years later she is still in the business, translating novels and magazine stories in her private office a couple of blocks away from home. *"Thanks to my knowledge of foreign languages such as English, Spanish, German, French and Italian I have still something to offer the magazine market,"* she says.

Does she feel like an old woman? *"No, not at all. I guess, looking in the mirror, that I should, but I lead such an incredibly active life that I don't really have time to think about how old I am. And then I work and socialize with a lot of younger people..."*

Besides her work Karin takes a vivid interest in social issues. *"Last year I joined a non governmental group trying to stop the construction of new highways around Stockholm. And I think we have succeeded."*

Better health, better education, professional opportunities and a comfortable financial situation have certainly opened new doors for the women of her generation, acknowledges Karin. However, she regrets that society has not yet recognized or redefined the roles that these *"third age"* women can and do play. *"Generally, Swedish women become invisible after 50. Nobody is interested in the life experience and wisdom they have. When the media describe the lives of women in their 70s they usually portray them as being weak, dependent ladies with problems of incontinence."*

And yet, as almost everywhere else in the developed world, the numbers of *"third age"* women in Sweden are on the increase. In 1970, women 60 years and over made up 21% of the female population. In 1990 this had increased to 26%. These women are no longer simply waiting to die. Like Karin Coyet, they're lives consist of multiple roles as professionals, partners, grandmothers, certainly, but also actors within their communities. And as governments are increasingly realizing, they also make up an important section of the electorate. As Karin Coyet sums up: *"watch out, we will eventually make ourselves heard!"*

She also travels: *"I can afford trips to see friends abroad every now and then, I have nothing to complain about"*, and, of course, she enjoys her role as as a grandmother, even if she says that she is *"not as good a grandmother as I would like to be"*. *"The conflict for the modern grandmother is that we don't have enough time,"* she smiles.

Looking back on her life Karin states: *"Being independent moneywise has been most important for me. There was a time when my husband was out of work and when I was supporting the family. And when I became a widow my income allowed me to stay in our apartment."*

Susanne HOBOHM
Stockholm

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SURVIVING CHANGE

The advantages enjoyed by "third age" women in the West are practically non-existent for millions of rural women elsewhere, caught in the maelstrom of economic change and family breakdown.

She goes by the nickname of Milady. She is 65 years old. Her hands shake as she searches for the page in the *"Book of Remembrance"* of the Tver oblast (Central Russia) containing the entry for her father, Ivan Belov, a war combatant listed as missing in action in 1942. Her mother died about then too. When Milady was eight her younger sister used to call her *"Mum"*. She spent in all 40 days at school, after which her elder sisters stopped her going since they needed a cook and nanny.

Her adult life was a reflection of her youth: a marriage memorable for the beatings meted out by her alcoholic husband, a series of miscarriages and still births. She did, however, manage to raise one daughter, and could perhaps have hoped for a happier *"old age"* as a *"babushka"* (grandmother), recognized for her wisdom, strength and know-how, looked after by her family: a position that in most traditional and rural societies has almost always been treated with the utmost respect. But the changes that have shaken Russia have had nothing whatsoever to offer Milady and the vast numbers of elderly Russian women in villages like hers.

Milady still has to gather and cut firewood for heating and cooking. With her maimed hand - injured while working on a farm - she deftly catches the billets as they fly off the axe. How many logs has she cut in her life? How many bundles has she tied? How many loads has she carried? And she still works for a living, lifting sacks of grain weighing 58 kilograms, more than her own weight.

She has long lived alone. Her daughter and family moved to a more prosperous life in town. They seldom get in touch. Her husband is dead. She has no understanding of the modern world outside. Like all old peasant women of her kind, she is illiterate.

THE HARSH FACTS

Let us interrupt the story of our heroine and look at the harsh facts. At her age Milady is a pensioner and entitled to stop working and live on a state pension. But she has to work (or *"work extra"*, as they say in Russia), because the pension is a mere pittance. In the former Soviet Union the low pensions of many groups of pensioners were partly offset by strict price controls in terms of basic foodstuffs and municipal services and housing, which generally enabled pensioners to make ends meet. Now, in the fifth year of Russia's current economic reform, the average pension fails to pay for the minimum standard of living computed for the population as a whole.

However, the meagre financial incomes have perhaps not been the main factor in the fundamentally altered social status of pensioners over the years of the reform. A huge blow to this population sector in Russia has been dealt by the following factors:

- high inflation rates, which, with constantly lagging indexation, strike hardest at those in receipt of fixed welfare payments;
- the devaluation of bank deposits, which has made the welfare of pensioners directly and exclusively dependent on current income; our Milady, too, had put aside money for a rainy day; it will now buy at most a kilo of sausage;
- higher payments for housing and municipal services;
- the commercialization of health care, making it impossible to get normal treatment and buy medicine, which is particularly important for the old; if Milady falls ill she resorts to popular remedies in the form of herbs and compresses, with a prayer or two thrown in;
- pressure on the labour market, making it practically impossible for pensioners to obtain stable, decently paid work.

PARADOX

Hence the paradox. Democratization and economic reform, which have been so enthusiastically embraced, have commanded a high price from certain sectors of Russian society. Whereas in the 1980s non-working pensioners simply had a lower standard of living than the gainfully employed portion of the population, the situation nowadays is that, in terms of overall social (not to mention psychological) burdens, pensioners have become veritable outcasts of society and hostages of the socio-economic policy applied in Russia of late.

But Milady is certainly not to be classed as beggarly, for she does have her own, albeit shoddy, little house; she does have a meagre pension, her health still and her dexterity; and, most importantly, she possesses the immense patience that has always helped Russian women in the face of hardship and adversity. Having virtually no family around her, Milady dispenses her love to her dumb friends: the watchdog, Sharik, the cat, Murka, the little she-goats she keeps in the shed, to which she brings their favourite dainty from the forest - a kolyuchy lapnik (a bouquet of fir twigs).

She has an earth-filled flower pot at home and in it she has put, instead of dried-up plants, an artificial rose on a wire stalk wrapped in coloured paper. And our rural Milady herself seems to be made of faded paper. A paper flower in an earth-filled pot. A woman with a good heart, always ready both to help and to commiserate. In front of the camera she gathered up all her dignity:

"I'm not much too look at, I'm afraid, so you'll have to make do with what you've got," she remarked.

Irina KOROLEVA and Liliya SEREDINA
Moscow

Rural women take their lives in their own hands

In Nabadj, a village in northeastern Senegal, the CO-ACTION PROGRAMME is raising funds to equip a women's social centre.

Your contribution will be used to buy :

- *Tools for market gardening*
- *Sewing machines*
- *Books*
- *Audio-visual materials*

You can participate by sending your contribution to:
UNESCO Co-Action Programme, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75352 Paris 07 SP, France
Contributions go directly to projects. All administrative costs are borne by UNESCO.

●

"The children of the much troubled Balkan region..." launched an appeal to *"world leaders"* at the first **CHILDREN'S CULTURE OF PEACE FESTIVAL** in Chios (Greece), from 20 to 25 May,

PLANTING A TREE FOR PEACE
(Photo UNESCO/M. Karela)

organised within the framework of UNESCO's Associated Schools Project. Some 60 children and their teachers from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Romania and Turkey discussed their aspirations, fears and hopes. They called for *"peace oriented education"* and the chance *"to learn about other cultures"*, while insisting that *"tolerance should be practiced rather than preached"* and that the leaders *"stop the pollution of our water resources...and the air we breathe"*.

▼

The ***"UNIVERSITY OF TOURISM FOR PEACE"*** will link universities in Israel, the West Bank, Morocco and Tunisia via satellite in offering distance education on cultural tourism. With an accord signed 20 June by UNESCO Director-General Federico Mayor and Gilbert Trigano, President of the Association for Tourism in Favour of Peace, the certified training programme of three years duration will start in 1996 with the aim of promoting tourism which respects both environment and cultural heritage.

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FULL POCKETS, EMPTY STOMACHS

It's time to re-think cultural roots as agro-business swallows up farmers in Arab regions, sowing the seeds for a social explosion.

"One of the major reasons why many agricultural development projects have failed is the lack of understanding of the cultural dimension of agricultural life." With this said, Egyptian anthropologist Fekri Hassan summed-up what most participants were feeling at a recent seminar on the links between culture and agriculture. The four-day seminar, organized by Egyptian authorities in cooperation with UNESCO and the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), opened in Cairo on 21 May, World Day for Cultural Development, gathering 20 sociologists, anthropologists and other specialists on rural societies from 10, mainly Arab,

Hassan explained that, in many cases, agricultural development models are imported and designed to ensure that towns have a regular food supply, without taking any account of the wishes, values or know-how of rural communities.

In the 1960s, several Arab countries *"tended to expect miracles from the socialist model"*, based on the collectivization of production through co-operatives, said Tunisian geographer Hafedh Sethom. He pointed to Algeria which *"practically destroyed its peasantry, having rigidified and bureaucratized the agrarian structures inherited from the colonial period. Today it is totally dependent on imports."*

In agriculture, as in other sectors, the socialist model has had its day. *"Nowadays we tend to think that agro-capitalism and agro-technology will solve the problem of the peasant,"* said Egyptian-born Greek sociologist Pandelis Glavanis. *"We look at the problem only from an urban, economic, quantitative perspective. It's an intellectual crisis."*

The participants agreed that urban values are imposed to the detriment of rural areas which city-dwellers both idealise and despise, but always misunderstand. *"In Egypt, the dominant urban class regards the village as the locus of both authenticity and backwardness,"* confirmed socio-anthropologist Reem Saad.

These prejudices influence the work of both researchers and planners and have relegated the primary role of rural societies - producing food - to the background, while depreciating the skills and know-how of peasant communities. The result is that they apply the methods used to modernise industry to the countryside, without consulting the people most closely concerned in the bid to maximise yields by mechanisation and chemical fertilizers.

AGRO-CAPITALISM

"The machine is the easy answer," Glavanis added. *"But the agrarian structure cannot be mechanised in the way in which industry can to make better cars, quicker and cheaper."* He went on to say that development agencies are beginning to realise that the green revolutions they promoted in developing countries from the 1970s onwards have failed. *"After millions of projects and investments, famine is increasing and food production is going down."*

Moreover, *"agro-capitalism"* implies a concentration of ownership, as the participants pointed out. It therefore deepens the crisis in which the *fellah* (peasant farmer) is struggling, sowing the seeds of dangerous social and political unrest. *"In Egypt, whenever there is some flexibility introduced into the system by changing policies, the system - that is really oriented towards the larger farmers - will undercut the world*

of the small farmers which has always been the basis of Egyptian agriculture," explained Nicholas Hopkins of the American University of Cairo. The risk of provoking a rural exodus is high - as 60% of Egyptian peasants have less than two *feddans* (about 8400 m²).

"Under the false pretext that they are resistant to change, we have marginalised these eco-social systems, we made them poor," said Glavanis. *"We must now make the effort to understand how they do things and then suggest changes to help them. The point is we don't listen. We teach."* Hassan added that *"this doesn't mean all traditions have to be preserved, because they may also hinder progress"*. Village hierarchy was taken as an example. *"Let's say that a community tells you: 'our values here boil down to one half of the village oppressing the other half'. Do you think we should base development on that? Of course not. We must pay careful attention to these questions concerning values,"* warned Hopkins. *"It is politically correct to say that culture should be respected. But there are things that really need to be eliminated: female circumcision for example which is prevalent in Egyptian rural societies,"* added Reem Saad.

"What is needed is a dialogue," said Hassan. *"We should also privilege certain beneficial values that come from a farming point of view: cooperation, sharing and family support."* According to Egyptian agro-economist Mohamed Abu Mandour, maintaining such solidarity is not incompatible with modernisation. For example, in his opinion it would be a good idea to reinforce the *"sakia"* - peasant groups organized to ensure a fair sharing of water, using animals to draw from wells for field irrigation. *"We could modernise by replacing the animal with an electric pump. This would preserve this excellent type of voluntary cooperative work instead of encouraging peasants to obtain the material individually, which penalises the poorest among them."* Sethom explained how the *"peasant's common sense and know-how"* have enabled the Tunisian valley of Medjerda to become a prosperous fruit-growing region, despite the government's initial opposition. *"It tried to force the peasantry to develop fodder production and dairy-farming, but they resisted, and won in the end by developing market gardening and growing fruit. Nobody thought they could do it. Yet today they have been so successful in producing apples, pears and peaches that Tunisia scarcely needs to import these fruits."*

THE UPPERHAND

The participants adopted a series of recommendations urging decision-makers and development agencies to take account of rural societies' know-how and cultures when planning, implementing and evaluating agricultural policies. Yet, they remain skeptical that their appeal will be heard. For food supply is, above all, a political issue.

"Many of the planners are Western educated and closely linked to the international financial community," explained Hassan. Glavanis added that Westerners want to keep the upperhand by maintaining the international division of labour which basically insists that *"we'll supply you with cereals and you produce cash crops to bring in foreign currency"*. With agro-business more interested in reaping the profits than feeding the world and development projects often acting like *"a bureaucracy constructing obstacles to all initiatives"*, Glavanis explained that respect for the cultural dimension of farming, isn't just politically correct - it's politically essential.

Sophie BOUKHARI
Cairo

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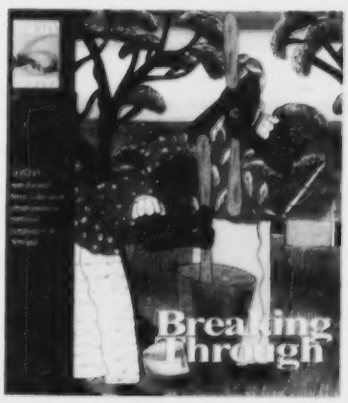
"Who could have imagined that I, Duus Konate, could make such a difference in my community!"
This woman is but one of the 15,000 people from 350 villages in Senegal to take part in the TOSTAN project - an informal, basic education programme offered in the country's national languages. **"BREAKING THROUGH"**, sixth in the series of Education for All brochures, spotlights this project which relies on local culture to go beyond promoting literacy in helping people to identify and resolve problems such as food and water supplies, hygiene (see Sources No. 66/1995).



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From Afganistan to Zambia, UNESCO presents "portraits" of the 48 least developed countries in a recently released document.
"LCDs PORTRAITS" provides quantitative and qualitative information concerning: living conditions (demographics, life expectancy, birth rate, urbanisation, access to healthcare, social and military spending); education and communications (literacy, school enrolment, communication infrastructure); the economy (resources by GNP and GDP, structures and infrastructures); certain internal and external political aspects. The second part focuses on broader patterns such as: migration and collective security, quality of life and the framework of State activities.

THE WORLD'S OLDEST CRIME

An international group of experts calls on the UN to bolster the battle against prostitution - a flagrant violation of human rights.

It's time that government leaders and the public recognized prostitution and its devastating effects on people. Instead of trying to distinguish between *"voluntary"* and *"forced"* prostitution, they must clearly speak out and take action! This was the unanimous opinion of an international expert committee meeting in Seoul (Republic of Korea) from 12 to 15 June upon the invitation of the Institute for the Development of Korean Women and UNESCO.

"For the first time in history, women have the capacity to organize, reflect, write and understand this kind of problem. It's the revolution of the century," said Wassyla Tamzali, UNESCO Coordinator for Women's Activities. *"They therefore have the historic responsibility of denouncing this scourge which has victimised women for centuries and is now reaching more and more children and men."*

After four days of discussions, the some 30 women participants drew up the Seoul Declaration for a World Without Sexual Exploitation and an action plan to be presented in Beijing (China) in September at the NGO Forum to be held simultaneously with the Fourth UN World Conference on Women. Another meeting is also planned, with UNESCO's support, to come up with ways of promoting awareness of these issues among the official delegations attending the conference.

IN THE NAME OF MORALITY

While the sex trade is not considered taboo in all societies, feminists and humanitarian organizations around the world have generally opposed it in the name of morality. *"But this type of condemnation has often encouraged transgressions by potential clients,"* said Tamzali.

So the Seoul meeting turned to the ethical dimensions involved. *"All forms of sexual exploitation are incompatible with human dignity, and therefore violate fundamental human rights,"* according to the Declaration, *"regardless of the age, gender, race, ethnicity or class of the victim."* In short, we should not, as has often been the case, 'ghettoise' prostitutes for moral or health reasons. *"We fight to save animals. We fight to preserve the environment... Why not fight for people?"* said Tamzali, while insisting that we recognize the sex trade as the equivalent to slavery. After all, it wasn't until slavery was seen as being an assault on human dignity that it became taboo.

We also need to ask ourselves how prostitution has come to be linked to sexuality. *"What sexuality are we talking about? Whose sexuality? And why?"* asked Cecilia Hofmann of the Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (Philippines). Prostitution is a pure and simple act of violence, the ultimate expression of a male-dominated society, insisted Ms Byun of Korea. *"It is not an individual misfortune but an integral part of a patriarchal system that makes possible the use of sex as an instrument of violence and power."*

SOUL-SEARCHING

None of which implies that women should be pitted against men. On the contrary, the participants stressed that they should fight together to preserve their common dignity. But women do need to engage in a bit of soul-searching. *"We have to change our way of thinking,"* said Belgian lawyer Michèle Hirsch. *"How would we react if we learned that one of our sons had been seeing a prostitute? Would we treat him like a criminal? We often show a kind of tolerant complicity towards boys. This reflects what I call a 'prostitutional relationship' set deep in our subconscious."*

In Costa Rica, for example, a boy becomes a man in the arms of a prostitute. In Viet Nam, the same women who brandished rifles in the war have now resigned themselves to earning a living as prostitutes. *"In my country, obedience is an essentially feminine quality,"* said Dr Duong Quynh Hoa.

There is also an important economic factor involved, particularly for developing countries. The money sent by emmigrant prostitutes to their families often amounts to considerable sums given the poverty of some Asian and African countries. Prostitution within these countries is also encouraged, with tourists from wealthy countries coming deliberately to take advantage of the *"services"* provided by young people and children.

In fact, the sex trade has become big business. In the Philippines, tourism grew

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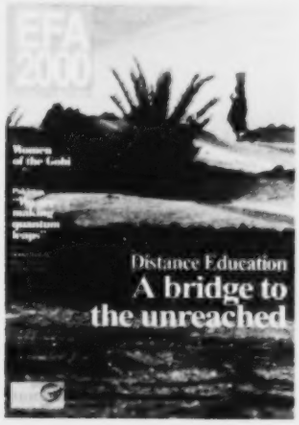
"A bridge to the unreached" is the title of the latest EFA 2000 bulletin focusing on **DISTANCE EDUCATION**. While a computer in every classroom is still a dream in most countries, distance education might be a solution in reaching a maximum number of people and providing them with quality education. The issue presents this teaching approach seen as *"a fundamental pillar of basic education"* with concrete examples in different regions using television, radio and conference telephone calls, such as UNESCO's project aimed at 1,500 nomadic women of Mongolia's Gobi Desert.



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How can **PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS** act as *"a locomotive for global solidarity"*? Almost 1,000 representatives of sports, educational, health, political and industrial associations from some 100 countries met to answer this question at the first World Forum on Physical Activity and Sport, held in Quebec from 21 to 25 May upon the Canadian government's invitation and with UNESCO's support. Looking to ways of promoting equitable access to sports activities, participants stressed the need to reinforce ethical values *"based on respect for others"* and international cooperation.

UNESCO SOURCES

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IT'S THE PIMPS AND CLIENTS WHO SHOULD BE PUNISHED (Photo GAMMA).

by 30% between 1972 and 1977, thanks to the dynamism of a sector officially called *"a hospitality industry"*, with prostitutes given respectable titles like *"guest relations officers"*. Everything was done to attract clients including a poster series showing the Miss Universe (1973) with a caption reading: *"There are others where she came from"*.

The Seoul Declaration set the record straight by clearly denouncing *"use of the term 'commercial sex worker' and the designation of prostitution as acceptable work by some countries, international agencies and other bodies"*.

The participants also discussed the more subtle ways in which sexual exploitation is sanctioned. For example, in some European countries, pornography is prominently displayed in bookshops and kiosks in the name of press freedom. But this justification is nothing more than window dressing for a *"multi-million dollar pornography industry"* which *"eroticizes sexual inequality and normalizes sexual violence"*, according to the Declaration.

In some countries, prostitution is touted as an expression of sexual liberation and considered to be the 'oldest profession in the world', implying a sense of personal freedom. But for the experts, this type of intellectual rationale *"disguises the powerful social, economic, political and cultural forces that push people into prostitution"*.

The meeting also focused on the flip-side seen in countries where no attempt is made to legalize or legitimize the sex trade. The result: prostitutes are treated like criminals. For example, in South Korea, they can be arrested by police and immediately shipped to re-education centres, where they are detained for six to 12 months without any judicial formalities.

Both of these approaches are reprehensible, said the experts. It's not the prostitutes who should be punished but the pimps, establishment owners and clients. Unfortunately, this is far from being accepted throughout the world. For example, the participants pointed to Spain's new penal code which, they said, bestows pimps with a certain legitimacy.

But once again, in waging the battle against prostitution, we must be careful to protect the victims involved. Highly repressive laws can deprive prostitutes of lodging by automatically considering their husbands or companions as pimps.

Some gains have been made, however, with a new legal approach taken in countries like Australia, the US, Germany, Norway and Sweden, where pedophiles are prosecuted when returning home after having engaged in illicit relations abroad.

THE PRICE OF SURVIVAL

The Seoul meeting concluded with some concrete proposals. Participants suggested creating a permanent working group at the United Nations on prostitution and sexual exploitation. The group would be responsible for developing new legal instruments to reinforce the 1949 Convention for the suppression of the traffic in persons and the exploitation of prostitution of others. They also called on the UN to adopt a charter of human rights, a system for monitoring abuses and a commission responsible for providing emergency relief for the victims - because those who do survive pay the price of multiple after-effects, often physical, but always psychological.

Finally, participants insisted that sexual offenders should be punished just like war criminals. *"Because,"* said Tamzali, *"what we've got here is definitely a war."*

Rathavary DUONG
Seoul

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"Silence, it is death! If you speak, you die. If you say nothing, you die. So speak up and die," wrote Tahar Djaout, the first journalist killed in Algeria's relentless war. Two years after his death on 2 June 1993, UNESCO released **"VIOLENCE"** a notebook in which the Organization *"denounces violence, pleads for tolerance"* and *"a culture of peace"*. After presenting the reasons for its publication, the notebook spotlights the murders, attacks and terrorism plaguing the country's intellectuals, students, artists, women, children and journalists since the spiral of violence began in January 1992.

● *UNESCO Press Service*

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More than 100 million children live on the streets, while another 150 million survive as child-labourers. Yet, *"there is no way street children - abandoned, exploited, ill-treated - can call for help. The only voice they have is our voice,"* said Director-General Federico Mayor in expressing the central message of an exhibition shown at UNESCO from 15 May to 3 June. Pannels of photographs showed children living on the streets or in city slums, surrounded by prostitution, drugs and violence. It also showed the 'other side of the street' where these kids develop a sense of solidarity. Intended to promote awareness of the problem and prevent social exclusion, this travelling exhibit is available in English, French and German and is free of charge to grade schools, highschools and youth associations.

A CONTINENTAL BLEND

Cultures mix in the strangest of ways - just take a look at the Arab cultural influences and communities in Latin America.

Riding his small, superbly harnessed, colt in the short-stirruped Turkish fashion, the man was visibly exhausted. He was followed by a number of warriors who displayed great respect for him. The trip had been long, all the way from Damascus, along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, across Egypt, the Maghreb and Berber lands.

Inspired by the historical novels of Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf, this account describes the decisive exile of Abd al-Rahman I, the heir of the Caliph of Damascus forced to flee after the massacre by the Abbasid in 750. Decisive because when he withdrew to his last bastion on the Iberian Peninsula, the last descendant of the Omayyad dynasty could not have imagined the splendours of the civilisation he was about to build - Al Andalus, a society which prospered through its openness and tolerance (see *Sources* No. 70), laying the foundations for a glorious epopee which left an indelible mark on Spain, Portugal and, nine centuries later, reached the far shores of the "West Indies" as they were called at the time.

CONQUISTADORS

Today, we can see how elements of this cultural heritage were transmitted to the Americas by the 16th century conquistadors with UNESCO's project, ACALAPI - "The Contribution of the Arab Culture to Ibero-American Cultures via Spain and Portugal". The project was launched four years ago on the initiative of Algeria, Mauritania and Yemen, with research getting underway in 1993 at a meeting of experts in Nouakchott (Mauritania).

The project's first phase recently came to a close at a meeting in Caracas (Venezuela), 12 to 14 June, where about 30 historians, geographers, linguists and other European, Arab and Latin American specialists had, for the first time, the occasion to compare their findings. These studies will be used to set up information networks, exchange programmes and a data bank, as part of the project's second phase.

"While we know a fair amount about Andalusian culture in Spain, this is the first time that studies have been devoted to the Iberian cultural remnants which were transmitted to the Americas," says Maria Rosa de Madariaga, who is responsible for the project at UNESCO. *"At the meeting, we clearly saw that this was an indirect transmission. It's important to understand that the 'Moriscos' (Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity) were forbidden from going to the Americas with the conquistadors out of fear that they would 'contaminate' the spread of Christianity. But the conquistadors were so impregnated with Arab culture that they didn't even realize they were transmitting it."*

LOOK TO THE STAR ON SAN CRISTOBAL CHURCH IN PUEBLA (MEXICO)
(Photo UNESCO/Desbrosses-Mauchamp).

To begin with, it can be argued that the cruel but brilliant Conquest wouldn't have been possible without the Moor's scientific and technological expertise combined with the navigating skills of the Spanish and Portuguese. The Arabs were particularly advanced in the fields of astronomy, cartography, geography and navigation, making substantial contributions to the success of the expeditions of adventurers at the end of the 15th century. Christopher Columbus himself acknowledged his debt to the astronomer Al Farghani and to the solar declination tables of Ibn al-Kammad without

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The **"INTERNATIONAL ACTION AGENDA"** was at the centre of discussions at the 8th working meeting of the World Commission on Culture and Development held in Chiba (Japan) from 8 to 9 June 1995. The agenda consists of a series of initiatives aimed at creating an international debate on culture and development. Participants also discussed holding a World Summit on this issue in the year 2000.

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"EL-SHO", a symphonic orchestral piece by Japanese composer Michio Kitazume and *"3 for 13"* for 13 instruments by Polish composer Pawel Mykletyn, 24, were selected with distinction by radio music producers participating in the 42nd International Rostrum of Composers held at UNESCO, 6 to 9 June.
Organized by the International Music Council with UNESCO's support, the Rostrum brought together 33 national networks from all continents with the aim of fostering exchanges of contemporary music performances.

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Reinforcing the **GLOBAL OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM** (GOOS) should be one of the focuses of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), concluded representatives of 124 countries at the IOC Assembly's 18th session, held at UNESCO, 13 to 27 June. Participants stressed the need for a regional approach in the planning and management of coastal zones, which are home to half of the world's population, and prevention of flooding and erosion in these regions. Public awareness of these problems also needs to be strengthened through non-technical publications and CD-ROMS.

which he could hardly have learned to sail the oceans.

Mujedar art presents another example confirming the debt which all societies owe to those preceding. This art form was *"neither Islamic nor Christian"* but a blend (métis) of the two, according to Gonzalo Barras Gualis, a specialist attending the meeting. He points to the minaret-inspired architecture which continued to dot the skylines of Christian Spain throughout the 12th to 15th centuries.

MAGICAL RESULTS

This blending process took on new flavours in the Americas, where Iberian influences *"mixed with pre-Columbian art forms, indigenous to the region"*. The new forms emerged in stages, passing first by the Atlantic archipelagos, the Canary Islands, Madeira and the Azores, before achieving an almost magical result in the East Indies by adapting itself to local materials and landscapes. Today, we see the results in the architecture and decorative arts in Tunja and Cartagena (Colombia), Havana and Trinidad (Cuba), Sucre (Bolivia), Quito (Ecuador) Cuzco and Lima (Peru) and many Mexican cities.

Who hasn't had the heady experience, when visiting Latin American cathedrals, churches and colonial houses, of coming across this harmonious blend - looking up to roof-tops where eight pointed Islamic stars are enriched with native gold as found on the convent of San Diego in Huejozingo, Mexico; or when admiring *"azulejos"*, the decorative tiles adorning patios and vestibules. As is the case for about five thousand Spanish words *"azulejo"*, in fact, comes from Arabic *"az-zulaiy - little stone"*.

The Andalusian influence is also seen in the wooden lattice jalousies of colonial houses (the Arab *moucharabiehs*, veiling the secrets and modesty of women), patios with their babbling fountains, the traditions of ironwork, embossing, saddle and harness-making...

The Arab contribution went beyond art, architecture and the crafts. As participants explain, irrigation techniques for arid lands (used especially in Mexico and Arizona) were grafted on Andean methods. Arab knowledge about herbs and medicine was enriched by that of local peoples. The Caribbean economic history, down to the ethno-cultural structure of today (which was also influenced by the arrival of African slaves), has also preserved an oriental flavour. It was the Arabs who brought sugar cane and coffee to Spain and Portugal, before they were introduced in the Antilles and Brazil.

History, however, didn't stop there. From the second half of the 19th century and into the 20th, waves of Arab immigrants from States under Ottoman rule (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine) travelled to the Americas, fleeing economic, political and religious crises. This explains why they were called *"Turks"*, a nickname still used in the lower regions of South America.

"In the past, theses and studies have only focused on Arab migrations from individual countries, the research presented in Caracas represents the first time that experts have studied the broader trends involved," according to Madariaga, which prompted some interesting hypotheses. Did Mujedar art and architecture make it easier for the Arab immigrants to feel more comfortable in these foreign lands, and thus facilitating their integration within local communities?

CHURNING THE MELTING POT

For several of the participants point out that despite initial difficulties, these immigrants were able to do more than just adapt to life in the Americas - they prospered economically and rose within the social ranks. Today, large and prestigious political families of Arab descent along with great commercial and industrial fortunes, as well as eminent members of the liberal professions live in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico and even in the small Central American countries like Honduras, for example, which has an influential Palestinian community. According to one of the participants, ethnocentric media sometimes mask the harmony which characterised this migration.

Not everyone was convinced, feeling that the integration hypothesis oversimplifies some complicated issues. One thing remains certain: the melting pot churned nine centuries ago by Abd al-Rhaman continues to blend the knowledge, traditions, rhythms and savours of four continents.

Leyla BARTET
Caracas

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The second edition of the **INDEX TRANSLATIONUM** has just been released with 725,000 bibliographic citations of translated books, covering all subjects, by 160,000 authors from more than 100 countries. This reference tool lists the languages in which an author's work has been translated, the most translated authors and the most popular subjects - all of which can be used in determining a country's influence through internationally appealing books. Available for 1,100 FF or $200 from UNESCO Publishing, this CD-ROM enables users to search by author, title, language, subject and country of publication.

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The latest issue of ***INISTE/ PROJECT 2000+***, Vol. XI, is now available. Intended for NGOs, schools and universities and governmental organizations, the bulletin reviews conferences, contests, grant and exchange programmes around the world aimed at promoting scientific and technological literacy.

✒ *Science and Technology Education Section*

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LOOKING AHEAD

The **GENERAL CONFERENCE** will hold its 28th session from 25 October to 16 November to approve the Medium-Term Strategy for 1996 to 2001 and the Programme and Budget for 1996-1997, preceeded by the 147th session of the **EXECUTIVE COUNCIL** from 6 to 20 October. In Tunis (Tunisia), the **INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON EDUCATION FOR THE 21st CENTURY** will hold its 7th session to examine its final draft report from 23 to 25 September. Members of the International Advisory Council on **GLOBAL SCIENTIFIC COMMUNICATIONS** (ACOSC) will meet at Headquarters from 26 to 27 September to recommend ways of ensuring equitable and sustainable access to scientific information around the world. Genetic counselling, neurosciences, population genetics and the teaching of bioethics in the Americas are all themes to be discussed at the third meeting of the **INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF BIOETHICS** to be held at Headquarters from 27 to 29 September. International Day for **NATIONAL DISASTER REDUCTION** will be marked throughout the UN system on 9 October. During the evening of 10 October, a ceremony will be held in honour of the **SPANISH AUTHOR JOSE BERGAMIN** at Headquarters. **"THE 21st CENTURY CITY: SOLIDARITY, CITIZENSHIP"** is the theme of a colloquium to be held at Headquarters from 11 to 12 October where some 35 experts are expected to discuss ways of resolving new challenges and problems related to urbanisation, urban ecology and relations between technology and culture in preparing for the 2nd UN Conference on Human Settlements - Habitat 2, to be held in June 1996. In celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations, some 50 young fashion designers will present their work submitted to the international contest **DESIGN 21** at a special showing to be held at Headquarters on 12 October.

A SPECIAL ISSUE in September will trace the main lines of UNESCO's programme for the coming six years, illustrated with some key activities in each of the Organization's five areas of competence (education, science and technology, culture, social sciences and communication).

SOURCES